

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
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## **CATHOLIC ORGANISATIONS RECOGNISED FOR SOCIAL IMPACT CONTRIBUTION IN THE ILLAWARRA IN HISTORIC ECUMENICAL REPORT**

The Catholic Church in the Diocese of Wollongong has been recognised alongside a range of Christian denominations for its significant contribution to more than \$9.7 million in social impact value across the Illawarra each year.

The recognition is reported in Australia's first Cinnamon Faith Action Audit (CFAA)—an initiative of Cinnamon Network Australia, an organisation committed to helping churches demonstrate Jesus' love in tangible ways to people experiencing vulnerability and isolation.

The CFAA survey measured the collective social impact of churches across the Illawarra in order to produce a detailed report of their collective influence, partnership, and resources for the benefit of people in need.

The audit involved responses from 101 churches and faith-based organisations, and found that together they served more than 140,000 people each year—more than half the combined population of Wollongong and Shellharbour.

Catholic parishes and organisations, including CatholicCare, accounted for more than a third of responses, reflecting the long tradition of service to those most in need by the Catholic Church.

Jude Hennessy, Director of the Office of Renewal and Evangelisation for the Diocese of Wollongong, said the ecumenical approach taken by Cinnamon Network Australia reinforces the benefits of collaboration between the Catholic Church and other Christian denominations in the diocese.

“Like so many others across faiths and denominations, I am really excited not only about the great things already happening because of the work of faith-based organisations, but how this can be enhanced,” he said. “We hope and pray that this report helps in the service of thousands of more people and in so doing, honours God, by being faith-based but not faith-biased, and serving all—especially those most vulnerable and in need.”

Cinnamon Network Australia National Director, Nic Mackay, said the aim of the audit is to help increase collaboration within and between faith traditions, open doors to government and other sectors, and demonstrate that faith really can be a force for good.

“Behind the numbers is the story of a region where people genuinely care about one another, where the least are not forgotten, and where faith organisations play an active role in the community,” he said. “It is a testament to the efforts of local churches and faith-based organisations, as well as the willingness of local authorities, businesses and others to come together for the benefit of those across the Illawarra.”

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*[L-R] Trish Cooney, CatholicCare; Greg Parrish, Office of the Bishop; Jo Clark, Catholic Women's League; Phil Inglis, Salvation Army; Debbie Gates, Office of the Bishop; Matt Baxter, Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong; Jude Hennessy, Office of the Bishop; Nic Mackay, Cinnamon Network Australia; Paul Bartlett, Lighthouse Church; Peter Hill, Catholic Education Diocese of Wollongong*

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